New York City School Library System Office of Library Services

Exploratorium – May 18, 2011 NYC Department of Education

**Title:** Transforming the Career Exploration Project

**Audience level:** High school

**Presenter:**

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**Description, Goals, Intended Outcomes:**

Many middle and high school teachers do a career unit that concludes with students creating uninspiring and plagiarism-prone final projects such as brochures or posters about a particular career. One of the ninth grade English teachers at the Seward Park campus does a career exploration project each spring. Tired of the cut-and-paste brochures that students created in previous years, we (the librarian and teacher) wanted the students to delve more deeply into a career, looking closely at both the preparation (educations and qualifications) for a particular career and the roles and responsibilities of someone in that career . The culminating task we gave the students?

“It has been ten years since you finished college (or your post-high school education). You have now worked at 1-3 different jobs, and are now looking for a new position. As part of your preparation to apply for a new position, *you need to write a résumé*.”   
  
To complete this project, students had to use not only print and online career resources, but also look at resources on colleges and professional and pre-professional organizations. They also learned to write a résumé and tailor a résumé template to a specific career.

**Process to Develop and Implement this Project:**

The librarian and teacher worked together to plan the project and the student materials. We wanted the students to be able to:

* Explain educational qualifications for a particular career, including licensing and certification requirements.
* Identify work places for a particular career.
* Identify different types of work activities within a given career.
* Create a résumé .

We decided what materials the students needed, and what the assessment would look like, as well as who was going to create each item. These included:

* Student assignment sheet
* Sample résumé
* Assessment rubric
* Résumé template

The librarian was responsible for updating the college and career sites on the library webpage.

We mapped out a tentative timeline, and scheduled library visits.

**Budget:** no additional funds were required for this project

**Timeline:** This is a sample timeline. We did not have students take the interest/skills inventories mentioned below. Note: 1 period is approximately 45 minutes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time needed** | **Activity** | **Responsibility** |
| 1 class period | Librarian and teacher meet to discuss parameters of project | Librarian and teacher |
|  | Create assignment sheet for students  Create assessment rubric | Librarian and/or teacher |
| 1 class period | Student introduction to the project | Librarian or teacher |
| Homework | Students choose a particular career to explore | Teacher |
| 1-2 class periods | (For younger students or students who have no particular career in mind: students take interest inventory and/or skills inventory to decide on what career to explore.) | Librarian |
| 2 class periods | Students come to library to use college and career resources (both print and online)and gather information | Teacher and librarian |
| 1 class period | Students work with résumé templates to start creating their résumés. | Librarian |
| 1 week  (non-class time) | Students work individually on their research of career and on their résumés outside of class before handing them in. | Teacher |

**Evidence of Outcomes, Possible Adaptations, Lessons Learned:**

EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES: It was clear even before the résumé s were turned in that “deeper learning” and more involved exploration was going on than in previous years. For example, a student who chose “lawyer” had to make a decision about what kind of law to practice, then had to learn which law firms were involved in that type of law ; students who chose jobs that did not require a college degree (e.g. actor) nonetheless had to plot out a career projectile and think carefully about the types of training he would need (e.g., dancing classes) and where he would get it. There were some funny mistakes in the first drafts that showed where students’ knowledge of how a career unfolded was flawed; the differences between these and the final résumé s were evidence of new learning.

POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS: Even though this assignment moves the project out of the “cut and paste” realm, it does not have a “real world” component, meaning that it is still a school assignment graded by a teacher.

Possible ways of expanding this to have a real world component:

* Students have their résumé s critiqued by someone in that particular career
* During a career day program, students participate in mock interviews, with résumé s as part of a portfolio.

**Common Core State Standards addressed:**

**Writing Standard 4:**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Skills taught:**

Résumé writing

**Assessments:** Prior to creating their résumé s, students were required to complete and hand in a Career Notes handout; this was graded for completeness and accuracy. Résumé s were evaluated for content, effort, neatness, and correctness.

**Resources Used:**

* Print college guides and career books.
* Online career materials, including Occupational Outlook Handbook, and other websites related to particular careers.
* Microsoft Word (for résumé template)